



## **Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission January 8, 2019**

**Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, January 8, 6:00 p.m., at the Military & Veteran Success Center, 3320 South Price Road, Tempe, Arizona.**

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Troy Friedman, Chair  
Matthew Schmitt, Vice-Chair  
William Blair  
Jeremy Farr  
Lauren Hyre (telephonically)  
Patricia Little-Upah  
Michelle Loposky (telephonically)  
David Lucier  
Abe McCann  
Jezreel Ramirez  
Laura Skotnicki

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

None

**City Staff Present:**

Octavia Harris, Human Services Deputy Director  
Parrish Spisz, Council Aide II+  
Robin Arredondo-Savage, Councilmember  
Melissa Placencia, Administrative Assistant II+

**Guests:**

Judge Gregg Maxon, East Valley Regional Veterans Court  
Teresa Vargas, East Valley Regional Veterans Court Coordinator

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order**

Chair Troy Friedman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances**

None

**Agenda Item 3 – Chair's Remarks**

Chair Troy Friedman thanked the Commission for appointing him as the Chair and looks forward to the goals of the Commission for 2019 and welcomes any feedback from Commission Members.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – East Valley Regional Veterans Court Update ([attachment](#))**

Judge Maxon and Teresa Vargas gave an overview of the East Valley Regional Veterans Court (EVRVC) process and provided participant data. The Commission is invited to attend an EVRVC docket.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – 2019 Commission Goals**

The Commission reviewed the 2019 goals as outlined in the 2018 Annual Report. Chair Troy Friedman would like to further define these goals and identify how the Commission will achieve these goals.

- **Quality of Life**
  - Support City Council performance measure 3.21 *“Engage Tempe employers to achieve a “Veteran-Supportive” designation greater than or equal to the average of Valley cities as awarded by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families*
    - Commission Member Abe McCann reported there are currently thirteen (13) employers with four (4) pending.
    - Councilmember Robin Arredondo-Savage requested a designation or custom logo specific to Tempe for employers to display. Abe will discuss with his directors and present to the Commission.
    - Abe is working with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce to sponsor a Veterans Supportive Training

Commission Member Jeremy Farr would like to align a Veterans recognition day with the Commission goals. Councilmember Robin Arredondo-Savage noted there are opportunities to collaborate with Jim Groen who oversees the Tempe Veterans Day parade.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Military & Veteran Success Center Update – Chair, Troy Friedman**

- Participating in the Tempe Point in Time Count
- Volunteers needed for Stand Down event (January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>)
  - Troy will send the details to staff to distribute to the Commission
- The director of the West Valley Military Veterans Success Center is leaving for a job in Senator Sinema’s office. Troy will be acting director over the West Valley Center until a replacement is found.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Fisher House Letter of Support ([attachment](#))**

Commission Member David Lucier drafted a letter of support and gave an overview of the Fisher House Foundation. David is seeking the support of Chair Troy Friedman and the Tempe Veterans Commission.

**MOTION: Commission Member Jeremy Farr moved to approve the Fisher House Letter of Support**

**SECOND: Motion seconded by Commission Member Abe McCann**

**AYES: Chair Troy Friedman, Vice-Chair Matthew Schmitt, Commission Member William Blair, Jeremy Farr, Lauren Hyre, Patricia Little-Upah, Michelle Loposky, David Lucier, Abe McCann, Jezreel Ramirez, Matthew Schmitt, and Laura Skotnicki**

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Commission Member Updates/Announcements**

Commission Member Michelle Loposky:

- Veterans Honor Stole Ceremony: May 4, 2019 at 2:00 pm

**Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items – February 5, 2019**

- 2019 Commission Goals
- Military & Veteran Success Center Update
- Commission Member Updates

**Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.**

Next meeting will be on February 5, 2019

Minutes Prepared by: Melissa Placencia  
Reviewed by: Octavia Harris

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Troy Friedman, Chair  
Tempe Veterans Commission

**EVRVC mission statement:** The EVRVC assists all veterans, including those transitioning from military service, by not only addressing the pending charges filed against them in the east valley municipal courts, but also addressing life situations that may be contributing to the veterans' charges, such as medical conditions, unemployment, lack of education and homelessness. The expected outcomes are to reduce recidivism and to assist Arizona veterans in becoming better prepared to function successfully in the community.

Many veterans have cases in multiple courts and the EVRVC centralizes dockets for multiple municipalities, utilizing limited resources more efficiently and effectively to serve a greater number of Arizona veterans.

EVRVC services provided January 2018 through November 2018:

- Served a total of 517 Arizona veterans.
- 632 cases referred from participating courts.
- 210 participants graduated from the program.
- 24 successfully completed program requirements without graduating.
- 208 referrals made to human service agencies for screenings and assessments.
- 138 referrals made to the VA for treatment.
- 1 participants referred to educational programs.

Based upon actual dockets it is anticipated the EVRVC will serve a minimum of 624 veterans within its fourth year

## Why Veterans' Court?

- Ensures participants meet obligations to the court, themselves, and the community by requiring them to address life situations that may have contributed to the charges filed against them.
- Addresses underlying issues that may be present, such as mental health and substance abuse.
- Expedites access to veteran-specific resources, such as benefits, assistance programs and treatment. Veterans are able to utilize benefits earned through service.
- Builds bonds and camaraderie among veterans by having participants undergo the process with others who have had similar experiences.



## Contact Numbers

### Carefree - Cave Creek Consolidated Court

(480) 488-1689

### Chandler Municipal Court

(480) 782-4700

### Fountain Hills Municipal Court

(480) 816-5103

### Gilbert Municipal Court

(480) 635-7800

### Paradise Valley Municipal Court

(480) 404-7000

### Scottsdale City Court

(480) 312-2442

### Tempe Municipal Court

(480) 350-8271

### Emergency or Crisis contact information:

In life-threatening situations, call 911.

National Veterans Crisis Line:  
1-800-273-8255 (press 1)  
or text 838255

## East Valley Regional Veterans' Court



Dockets are held weekly at:

Tempe Municipal Court  
140 East Fifth Street  
Tempe, AZ 85281



## Our Mission

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The East Valley Regional Veterans' Court assists all veterans, including those currently serving or transitioning from military service, by not only addressing the pending charges filed against them in the east valley municipal courts, but also addressing life situations that may be contributing to the veterans' charges, such as medical conditions, unemployment, lack of education and homelessness. The expected outcomes are to reduce recidivism and to assist veterans in becoming better prepared to function successfully in the community.

### Participating Municipalities:

Carefree-Cave Creek  
Chandler  
Fountain Hills  
Gilbert  
Paradise Valley  
Scottsdale  
Tempe



*This program is funded in part by the Arizona Department of Veterans Services as made available through the Arizona Veterans' Donations Fund.*

## Eligibility

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Individuals who have served in the Military, regardless of military discharge or length of service, or if on active duty, charged with misdemeanor violations filed in any of the participating East Valley Regional Veterans' Courts are eligible for participation in the program.

Participating Prosecutor Offices can refuse admission to the program based upon a review of facts and/or criminal history, or in the interest of justice. Contested violations are not eligible and will be referred to a non-Veteran Court docket.

To be considered for the East Valley Regional Veterans' Court, ask court staff, the assigned judge, the prosecutor, a private or court appointed attorney to determine eligibility.

## Collaborative Effort

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The East Valley Regional Veterans' Court is a collaborative effort among judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the Department of Veterans Affairs Justice Outreach program, and human service agencies, working together to assist veterans to meet individualized case plans.

## What Happens

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- A unique case plan is designed for each veteran. Case plan requirements can range from educational programs/individual counseling to intensive inpatient treatment.
- Once referred, a Court Appointed Attorney will be assigned to each participant and will provide legal representation.
- **Staffing:** Prior to every Veterans' Court calendar, the team gathers to review and discuss participant progress and compliance.
- **Directives:** Veterans' Court participants are given directives by the Judge, including self-improvement directives, to be completed by the next court date.
- Participants who complete all directives may earn a reduced sentence, reduced charge(s) and/or possible dismissal of charges.

## EAST VALLEY REGIONAL VETERANS' COURT AT A GLANCE



- Entrance into the program is voluntary
- You, the Prosecutor and Judge must all agree that your case is to be transferred to the East Valley Regional Veterans' Court docket
- This docket does not conduct criminal trials
- Your program with the Court may include counseling services through the VA
- A Veterans' Justice Outreach Coordinator and the Veterans' Court Team will monitor your progress
- If you have a qualifying charge and no criminal history, your case **may be dismissed** upon recommendation by the prosecutor and successful completion of goals that are set at each court appearance

Participants					
Calendar Year	Beginning # Participants	New Participants	Total Participants*	Total Grads & Exited	Current Active Participants
2016 - starting 7/21/16	86	153	239	101	138
2017	138	366	504	331	173
2018	173	367	540	365	175

Cases							
Calendar Year	Beginning # Cases	New Cases	Total Cases IN	Grad Cases Disposed	Exited without RVC Completion	Total Cases OUT	Current Active Cases
2016 - starting 7/21/16	105	179	284	68	49	117	167
2017	167	414	581	198	178	376	205
2018	205	454	659	280	145	426	233

Exited Participants										
Calendar Year	Graduates			Exited without RVC Program Completion						
	Successfully Completed all Directives	Graduate Duration in RVC (months)	Re-entry after completion	Moved to regular track	Moved to another specialty docket	Suspended Prosecution	MTD or Plea w/out Program Completion	Total Exited without Program Completion	Exited Duration in RVC (months)	Re-entry after exit w/out completion
2016 - starting 7/21/16	63	3.58	2	23	1	0	14	38	2.47	4
2017	183	4.80	9	109	2	0	37	148	3.87	15
2018	248	5.78	23	102	1	0	13	116	3.64	21

Service Referrals									
Calendar Year	Screening							Educational Programs	
	TSASS Screening	THS DV Assessment	GYAR SA Screening	GYAR DV Assessment	VA Intake	Care 7 MH Assessment	***Community based screening	CME Program	Constructive Decisions
2016 - starting 7/21/16	52	9	12	7	52	0		0	15
2017	154	58	26	18	161	7		1	14
2018	90	45	24	11	152	25	20	0	1

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**TSASS Screening:** Tempe Substance Abuse Screening Services at Tempe Human Services

**THS DV Assessment:** Tempe Human Services Domestic Violence Assessment

**GYAR SA Screening:** Gilbert Youth & Adult Resources Substance Abuse Screening

**GYAR DV Assessment:** Gilbert Youth & Adult Resources Domestic Violence Assessment

**VA Intake:** U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Health Care System Intake

**Care 7 MH Assessment:** Care 7 Mental Health Assessment \*\*\*Started July 2017

**CME Program:** Conflict Management Education Program at Tempe Human Services

**CD Program:** Constructive Decisions Program at Tempe Human Services

\*Potential for participants to be counted more than once if referred from multiple jurisdictions

\*\*\*Referrals to community-based screening agencies on DUI cases began Oct 2018 (previously referred to THS)

CME Program & Constructive Decisions are no longer offered, at least as of July 2018





## **Sample/Draft Letter of Support for Fisher House – Valley of the Sun**

To: Fisher House Foundation

From: Tempe Veterans Commission

Subject: Community Support for a Fisher House in Phoenix

The Tempe Veterans Commission is a duly constituted enterprise which advises the Tempe City Council on matters relative to Veterans in the areas of education & training, jobs & economic opportunities, and health & wellness. The Commission is organized by and with Veterans throughout the community with a broad range of veteran related expertise.

In addition to sending the Foundation this letter of support, we will also urge our City Council to issue a proclamation in support of a Fisher House in Phoenix, Arizona.

It is the intent of this Commission to express its support for a Fisher House in Phoenix, Arizona based upon the following:

- Phoenix, the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the US, does not have a Fisher House.
- Over 350,000 Veterans live within Maricopa County.
- The PVAHCS is one of the largest VA medical centers in the US and growing.
- Tempe Veterans are served by the PVAHCS.
- Family involvement is necessary to the treatment and recovery of service members and veterans.
- The Tempe Veterans Commission has determined that caring for those that have borne the burden of battle is a sacred, public responsibility and should be addressed by all necessary stakeholders.

Yours in Service,

Troy Friedman, Commission Chair

Tempe Veterans Commission



January 5, 2019

The Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System (PVAHCS) and a group of Arizona veterans have established a collaborative effort to begin the process of establishing a Fisher House in Phoenix. This is a long term project and an application to the Fisher House will not begin until at least the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020. Our first tasks include: a) having the Legislature pass a resolution of support for a Fisher House and, b) to have letters of support from multiple and varied community members.

**A draft resolution** has already been submitted for legislative consideration. See Page 2.

Our next step is to receive **letters of support** from the community and that is what we are asking now.

Administratively, you can either send a hard copy via USPS or via email. Please submit on your organization's letterhead and signed by an authorized signer.

Mail to:

David Lucier, President  
Arizona Veterans & Military Leadership Alliance  
569 S. Roosevelt St.  
Tempe, AZ 85281

Or Email to: davidflucier@gmail.com

The following points should be included in your letter or email:

- Phoenix, the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the US, does not have a Fisher House
- The PVAHCS is one of the largest VA medical centers in the US and growing
- Family involvement is necessary to the treatment and recovery of service members and veterans.
- Consistent with our mission (Organization) supports the construction and operation of a Fisher House in Phoenix.
- And/or use some of the points outlined in the resolution

Please visit the Fisher House website for further information: <https://www.fisherhouse.org/>



A Resolution is a declaration or expression of legislative opinion, will, intent or resolve in matters within the legislature's legal purview. Three types of resolutions are used in this state. Here are two forms which are of relevance to a Resolution for the Fisher House.

- A **simple resolution** is processed only through the chamber in which it is introduced. It may express an opinion, appoint a committee, express regret on the death of a former legislator or other prominent person....A simple resolution is not signed by the governor.
- A **concurrent resolution** is processed through both houses but is not signed by the governor. Like a simple resolution, it may provide for an expression of opinion, commemoration, congratulations or sentiment, only for both houses.

### **A House Concurrent Resolution**

**Whereas,** the cost of the battle continues long after the last round is fired, and

**Whereas,** Arizona veterans continue to bear the burden of the wars they fought and the wounds they carry, and

**Whereas,** the sacred responsibility for caring for these valiant warriors falls to the veteran's family, their community, and their leaders, and

**Whereas,** there are no facilities in the Phoenix metro area which are free and available to service members, veterans and their families while a loved one is receiving medical care as a result of their service, and

**Whereas,** the Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where service members, veterans and their families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital, and

**Whereas,** on further consideration, the Legislature has determined that caring for those that have borne the burden of battle is a sacred, public responsibility and should be addressed by all necessary stakeholders.

**Be it resolved** by the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, that the construction and operation of a Fisher House near the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System should proceed forthwith.